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my sleeve, however. I observed three friends coming to comfort Job. I know these three: *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*, raging zealots one and all. They will surely going to pile on Job because they believe his losses are evidence that he has been a terrible sinner who must repent. They can see no other explanation for what the man has been through. Job's losses must be punishment from an angry God. Of course, they don't have a clue that it was me, not God, causing all of Job's problems.

Bless them! Job's friends have really hammered him in speech after speech. They started subtly, suggesting that anyone in his right mind would believe Job a sinner. But, Job would not budge. So, the three friends upped their rhetoric in the next rounds of speeches. Finally, they resorted to outright verbal battery to convince Job he must repent of hidden sin.

Job, for his part, merely bore it all with little more than the occasional emotional outburst at their importunity. He expressed confusion and pain over what was happening to him. As far as he could tell it was the Almighty who shot him full of arrows, and he longed to know why (Job 6:4ff), but Job never caved in to his friend's chastening speeches. Job called his friends "*miserable comforters*" (Job 16:2). He did not know what was happening, but he was confident that his redeemer lived (Job 19:25). Job stated his conviction that even though his flesh was being destroyed, he would someday, in his flesh, see God (vs. 26).

What does a devil have to do anymore to destroy a righteous man? Apparently a lot more than I was capable of doing.

I had no choice but to slink away in shame. It's incidents like this one that convince me that God was right when He foretold my ultimate downfall.

Yet, I press on. There must be weaker people whom I can corrupt coming down the pike.



October 18, 2020

A NEW ENTRY FROM THE DEVIL'S DIARY

David Weaks

Dear Diary,

I guess now is as good a time as any to tell you about one of my real failures during this era of human history. I really considered omitting this story, because I look pretty inept in it. The incident in question involves a man named Job.

I had have been watching Job for some time and I have noted that he is unlike most humans. He seemed to be intent on doing exactly what God wanted him to do.

He hails from the land of Uz, and is among the better men who have lived after the flood. I know people later in history will debate about when Job lived, but it is clear he lived after the flood because of this statement: "*Will*

you keep to the old way which wicked men have trod, who were cut down before their time, whose foundations were swept away by a flood?" (Job 22:15-16). There was no temple yet nor priesthood, and so Job performed the duties of a family patriarch in offering worship on behalf of his children (1:5). Much like people just after the flood, Job must have lived a couple of centuries at least. We know for sure that he lived after the restoration of his wealth for one hundred and forty more years. He also saw and the birth of more children, Job lived to see his grandchildren for four generations (42:10-17). This was after Job had lost his first set of grown children to catastrophe. He may have been nearing the middle to end of his first century by the time

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the events of this story happened.

Job is an upright man and he feared God and shunned evil (vs. 1).

What is surprising about Job's righteousness is that he was also very rich in the world's goods. Job had a very large family, and he also had thousands of animals in his flocks and herds (vs. 2-3). His household was very large, and he was considered to be the greatest of all the people of the East (vs. 3b). A rich man who is righteous is truly as rare as "hen's teeth" (Trust me, that idiom will catch on.) [See: Mark 10:25].

I should have known better, but I couldn't resist. I approached God openly and challenged Him regarding the supposed faithfulness of Job. I don't know why I was so bold. I had seen enough evidence that God always found a faithful man among the sinful dregs of mankind. Why did I think Job would be any different than Enoch and Noah? Once I committed to the debate, however, I dove right in. I had just finished walking to and fro upon the earth (vs. 7), and as I approached God, the Lord turned to me and asked: *"Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"* (1:8). Arrogantly, I challenged the Lord on this point. I reasoned that Job was only faithful because he lived a

charmed life. If God took away some of his wealth, then Job would curse Him to His face (vs. 9-11).

To my surprise, the Lord gave me permission to put Job to the test. God said to me: *"Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person"* (vs. 12). This was going to be a breeze! I was given free reign over the life of a single human. I was convinced that he would crumble under the pressure of losing everything. To my surprise, I was wrong.

I pressed my advantage against Job. I don't believe in wasting an opportunity, so I wiped out all of his wealth and then as I killed all of his children in a freak storm. I had seen enough in Job to know that he would not buckle under light pressure like most people. I would have to really "pour it on" him. So, I measured out his losses and made it so that while Job was hearing about one tragedy, another of his servants came to him to report another one. Then, finally, Job received word of the deaths of all of his children (vs. 13-19).

No one, and I mean no one would weather this kind of attack and these kinds of losses with his faith intact.

Nobody except Job, as it turns out.

Did Job curse God like I expected? Did he shake an angry

fist heavenward and denounce the Creator? No, what Job did stunned me. He *"arose, tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he fell to the ground and worshiped"* (vs. 20). Then Job said: *"Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord"* (vs. 21). You must be kidding me!?! Where was the wrath, the bitterness, the blind rage that I expected? It was nowhere to be seen...except in me, of course. Job's worshipful acceptance of his fate really burned me up. How was this possible? In all of this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong (vs. 22).

Okay, so Job is serious. Well, so am I! I can play hardball.

I approached God a second time, and was none too happy to hear the Lord cheerfully say: *"Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause"* (Job 2:3). With more than a little impatience, I pointed out the Lord's misplaced confidence. I argued that any man would do whatever he must to save his own life. If God would take away Job's health, then Job would fall over himself in his rush

to curse God to His face (vs. 4-5).

Once again, God granted me wide latitude to torture Job physically (vs. 6). So, I struck Job with painful boils from his head to his toes, and watched in glee while Job scraped himself with broken pottery pieces, and sat in ashes (vs. 7-8). "Here it comes," I thought, "God is about to see His golden boy, Job, cursing and braying against his losses." But, no, nothing of the kind happened. Instead, Job seemed take it all in stride.

I applied a little more pressure and prompted Job's wife to "up the ante." She was downright nasty as she said to Job: *"Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"* (vs. 9). She really impressed me! What an angry little woman. But, Job did not curse God, in fact, he chastised his wife for suggesting such a thing. He told her she was foolish and he was prepared to accept adversity from God if need be, because he had received so much good from Him (vs. 10).

I guess I should have seen it coming, but I didn't. Job really surprised me. You can make the argument that Job lost more during the last few days than anyone else in previous history lost in a lifetime, and he remained righteous throughout his ordeal. I was just sure such tremendous losses would be too much for job.

I still have one more "ace" up